

**Submission
No 335**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE
AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION**

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 25/10/2014

Partially Confidential

The Reverend Fred Nile

I wish to submit my objection to two planning proposals for Newcastle

The truncation of the railway line to Broadmeadow on 26 December is an act of vandalism. Why would a Government spend around \$150 million removing operating infrastructure to the centre of the city when a University department is being moved into the city and revitalisation will lead to more people living in the city. Increasing the population and removing heavy rail is absurd.

This destruction of infrastructure and decision by the Government is a wicked decision and it will be regretted forever. A Newcastle Herald opinion survey revealed that the majority of the people in Newcastle do not want the heavy rail removed. Who does and why the rush?

We do know that the developer GPT stated some time ago that they would not invest in Newcastle unless the heavy rail was removed. In other words' the developers want it removed. I understand Hunter Development Corporation want it removed, I presume because their members see some advantage in it being removed. The people who actually live in the city and who use the railway do not want it removed and have never been consulted. Governments are supposed to represent the citizens, not narrow interest groups. The Government is determined to remove infrastructure that the people want retained and the developers want removed. This is not democracy.

The monies raised by the sale of the Newcastle Port Corporation could be used to "sink" the railway line into cuttings or put in underpasses or overpasses to solve the alleged problems of: lack of access to foreshore and delaying traffic at level crossings. In my view these are false reasons.

The second issue is the proposed plan to construct three tower blocks in the heritage CBD area of Newcastle. This is an arrogant plan which has not taken in to account the views of the residents. As you will no doubt know from other submissions there was an earlier plan to have the new CBD at Wickham where there are less heritage buildings. Very little consultation was carried out with residents and there was little time for comment on the changes to the plans. The reports by consultants have taken little or no notice of the heritage buildings that will be forever compromised by the building of tower blocks in front of them. There are buildings that are listed on the National Estate that will have tower blocks constructed in front of them. Views to and from these buildings will be blocked. Newcastle Christ Church cathedral has been considered but views to and from the Cathedral will be blocked from many angles.

Newcastle is the second oldest city on the Australian mainland and has a collection of medium rise 19th & 20th century buildings, mostly intact. This should be preserved. Development should be to the current height levels. They should not be changed to satisfy the needs of a developer, especially when the developer is a government authority who is also the approving authority. This is a conflict of interest. Again, the developers' needs are catered to rather than the electors who live there. High rise buildings will compromise and destroy the character of the CBD of Newcastle forever.

Both of the truncation of the railway line and the proposal to build high rise in the heritage area of Newcastle should not go ahead. Both are against the expressed view of the citizens who will be most affected by these terrible proposals.